



Prayer of Repentance for Sexual Abuse in the Church

Music suggestions:

“O Lord, hear our prayer” (Taize)

Ambiance suggestions:

On the table have a cover, candle and a purple stole/scarf. At the conclusion of this prayer, replace the stole/scarf with a white one.



Introduction:

Reverend Doug Koesel, Pastor of Blessed Trinity Parish in Cleveland, in his homily of Aug. 19, stated:

Our faithful people are asking us hard questions for which there are no really good answers. Hopefully time and contrition and resolve and prayer and above all, structural change, will help the healing. Let's pray for one another in these days as we try to minister to others, especially those who have been harmed or feel betrayed. Let's also not forget to minister to one another.

We, too, have been asked to join in prayer and repentance in response to the recent exposure of sexual abuse and cover-ups by those who should have been strongest to protect the vulnerable among us.

We offer this prayer to SNJMs and friends in response to this call.

Opening call to repentance: Taize Prayer -
chant slowly and softly, three times

O Lord, hear our prayer. O Lord, hear our prayer.
When we call, answer us.

O Lord, hear our prayer. O Lord, hear our prayer.
Come, and listen to us.

Silence



Leader: Let us pray.

All: I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore, I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, and all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God. May almighty God have mercy on us, and forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

Opening prayer:

O God, so often have our liturgies addressed you as "Father." How often have we addressed as "Father" those who are charged with leadership in our faith communities. So we are stunned and demoralized again, when those to whom we have given trust to represent you among us have failed in the most basic duty of parents: to protect their children and all vulnerable persons. Once again we are speechless when our friends and neighbors challenge us, saying "How can you stay in a church that breeds such behavior?"

We come you with so many feelings swirling around in us, asking that your Spirit visit us deeply in this time of pain and confusion with a plethora of feelings: sadness, anger, disappointment, shock, embarrassment. ... We want to reach out in loving and prayerful support for those we know who suffered abuse, humiliation, disregard and disrespect in any way from those whom they trusted within our church.

Readings:

Is 58: 6-12

Is not this the sort of fast that pleases me—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks—to break unjust fetters and undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke, to share your bread with the hungry, and shelter the homeless poor, to clothe the one you see to be naked and not turn from our own kin? Then will your light shine like the dawn and your wound be quickly healed over. Your integrity will go before you and the glory of Yahweh behind you. Cry, and Yahweh will answer; call, "I am here."



If you do away with the yoke, the clenched fist, the wicked word, if you give your bread to the hungry, and relief to the oppressed, your light will rise in the darkness and your shadows become like noon. Yahweh will always guide you, giving you relief in desert places. He will give strength to your bones and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water whose water never runs dry. You will rebuild the ancient ruins, build up on the old foundations. You will be called "Breach-mender," "Restorer of ruined houses."

Silence

I Cor 12: 26-27

If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

Silence

Anger, shock, grief, shame. There is one other word that we bishops must summon: resolve. We must resolve to face our failures and hold each other accountable. We must resolve to be clear-eyed about what we have done, what we have failed to do, and what remains to be done. We must resolve to live in the light of humility, of repentance, of honesty—the life of Christ. As your bishop, I pledge to continue holding firm to that resolve. And I ask for you to pray for all victims of abuse.

Cardinal Blasé Cupich
Letter to the people of the Archdiocese of Chicago
Aug. 17, 2018

Silence

Death in the Church: Is New Life Ahead?

We fragile, vulnerable humans are “cooperative co-creators” and it does make a difference how we live our lives. Our participation in the mystery of Divine love, incarnate and hidden

in the brokenness of our world, lies at the basis of a healing world. The shocking news of the abuse crisis crushes our hearts, but know too that God’s heart is broken; that the body of Christ is crucified over and over again, for when one member is abused the whole Body is abused. But



our faith [in Jesus] must remain unshaken. Christ *is* risen from the dead; the final word is not death but Life. We will rise from these ashes but we cannot stand still nor can we turn back. Our hands are now put to the plow and we must forge a new path ahead. The Church will be born anew, for God is doing new things.

Ilia Delio, OSF
Aug. 28, 2018

Questions for reflection:

What feelings does this latest revelation surface in you?
Sit with all of them in the presence of God.

Response

L: From judging ourselves better than "them,"
L: From looking the other way when another is hurt,
L: From casting the first stone,

R: O God, forgive us.
R: O God, challenge us.
R: O God, stay our hands.

Now, still in the presence of God, ask:
What response are You calling me/us to today?

Response

L: For binding up wounds,
L: For creating safe spaces,
L: For speaking the truth to power,

R: O God, strengthen us.
R: O Shepherd, guide us.
R: O Lord, empower us.

Other prayers

Concluding prayer:

Holy Spirit, help us to open our eyes and our hearts to other people's sufferings and to overcome the thirst for power and possessions that are so often the root of those evils. May fasting and prayer open our ears to the hushed pain felt by children, young people and the disabled. We ask this in the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. Amen.

Change the purple scarf to white

Leader: We go forth together in the spirit of Marie Rose:

All: "Walking, as we do, along the same pathway, let us unite our efforts to overcome the difficulties that may arise."

Blessed Marie-Rose Durocher

Depart in silence



Prayer service created by: Sisters Beth Liebert, Carol Ries and Fran Kearney.

The Spiritual Ministries Network of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJM) provides a variety of prayer services for personal and group spiritual nourishment. May your prayer life draw you closer to the Divine.

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